

Washington, DC - Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has successfully amended the 2009 Foreign Relations Reauthorization Act to include key human rights and nuclear security provisions.

“Our foreign policy and foreign assistance programs reflect our values as a nation,” said Fortenberry. “We must work to ensure that these vital elements of U.S. policy represent shared convictions about the core ideals that undergird just civil institutions and help to bind the human family. Our policies should create security for the United States, foster justice, hope, and opportunity throughout the developing world, and help people, especially the most vulnerable, to meet their basic human needs.

“It is appropriate to invest in good programs to achieve these noble objectives. Equally as important is the need for prudent stewardship of our financial and human resources to achieve our diplomatic mission and meet unprecedented challenges to our national security. I am pleased that two of my amendments, which would strengthen nuclear safeguards and protect vulnerable minority populations in the Middle East, were included in this foreign assistance reauthorization measure.”

The Foreign Relations Reauthorization, as passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee late yesterday, contained two key Fortenberry initiatives:

Nuclear safeguards would be strengthened by incorporating key recommendations of the bipartisan Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, including the implementation of near-real-time surveillance and wide-area surveillance at facilities of concern. It would also provide for routine assessment of the International Atomic Energy Agency' ability to meet its inspection goals, and support appropriate means of visitor registry and country-by-country inventory of nuclear materials.

Focused effort would be made by the U.S. State Department to examine the situation of religious minorities in Iraq and other religious minorities throughout the Middle East to determine what steps can be taken to decrease their vulnerability to intimidation and violence.

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